



Office of The Attorney General
State of Connecticut

**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
MARCH 7, 2011**

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on HB 6494, "An Act Concerning Claims of the State for Repayment of Aid and Parental Liability." I support this bill because it will result in increased revenues during these difficult financial times and, at the same time, lessen the burden on the already strained resources of my office and the Department of Administrative Services. Importantly, this bill does not impose any additional liability upon our citizens. Rather, it simplifies the process through which existing liabilities are recovered.

Section 1 of the bill makes technical changes to clarify that "child or children" means "dependent child" for purposes of section 17b-75 of the General Statutes. Sections 2 and 3 of the bill constitute more substantive changes, which I also support.

Section 2 clarifies that the "fifty (50%) percent rule" of section 17b-94 applies to reimbursements owed by parents whose dependent child or children received public assistance benefits under certain public assistance programs if the reimbursement is derived from an inheritance that the parent is receiving. It also clarifies that the state has lien and assignment rights upon a parent's inheritance in order to secure reimbursement obligations owed to the State. As it presently is written, section 17b-93 unequivocally establishes the liability of parents for reimbursement of the public assistance benefits received by their dependent child or children under the Temporary Family Assistance, State Administered General Assistance and Aid to Families with Dependent Children public assistance programs. Thus, the proposed changes to subsection (b) of 17b-94 do not impose any additional liability upon those parents.

Section 3 of HB 6494 clarifies section 17b-224 of the General Statutes, which imposes upon a patient who has received aid or care in a humane institution the responsibility to reimburse the State for the cost of the aid or care received. Section 3 of the Bill simply makes clear that the "50% rule" applies to a patient's liability under section 17b-224 and that the State has the benefit of a lien and assignment rights when the source of reimbursement is the patient's cause of action or inheritance.

In short, HB 6494 is an important clarification, which will benefit our taxpayers and reduce the resources that my office and the Department of Administrative Services currently devote to answering questions that arise as a result of the ambiguity of these statutes as presently written.

Thank you once again for your efforts on this important matter. I look forward to working with all of the members of the committee.

Madam Chair [Slossberg], Vice –Chair [Meyer], members of the committee:

Good morning. My name is David Wedge. I am here to provide comment on Bill 1010 as it relates to the school construction grant program. I basically support those components but am offering suggestions.

Until this past summer I had been employed by the State of Connecticut for over 30 years; the last 27 years with the Department of Education within the Bureau of School Facilities. Since about 1992 (almost 20 years) I was the manager of the school construction grant program.

I ask two things regarding my testimony:

1. I am here as David Wedge, private citizen. Please understand that I am not in any way representing the State Department of Education;
2. That my testimony not be viewed as being opposed to the bill, but rather of being supportive of the bill with recommended modifications.

In light of the current economy I agree that the School Construction Grant program should be modified. There are many of the modifications proposed in this bill make sense. However, in my professional opinion, there are two components of the proposed bill that my recommendation to senior management would be to not include. They are

- Sec 57 Reversing the restriction of grant eligibility of fee increases of project managers and construction managers ;
- Sec 39 Transfer of the operational function of the program from the Department of Education to the proposed new Department of Construction Services which is the focus of my discussion.

I want to emphasize that this is a state grant program, not a state construction program. While the State is providing financial assistance for construction projects, the state is not actually constructing these facilities. These actual construction projects are municipal endeavors. In the delivery and management of this multi-billion dollar grant program, including the financial projections and verification of compliance with the accessibility laws and regulations based on the academic program, the Bureau of School Facilities must rely upon, and routine interact with other bureaus within the Department of Education. These include:

- The Bureau of Grants Processing who actually calculate and pay the individual grants to cities and towns based on the data provided and certified by the Bureau of School Facilities;
- The Office of Legal and Governmental Affairs whose guidance and advice is routinely sought regarding interpretation of education law and state policy;
- The Bureau of Information Technology who has the computer programming knowledge and skills required to maintain and modify as needed the extensive computer programs created for the on-line data collection and the in-house management of project data;
- Office of Internal Audit who audits every individual project;
- Multiple SDE program offices regarding programmatic aspects of proposed projects for grant applicability;
 - Vocational agriculture ;
 - Interdistrict magnets;